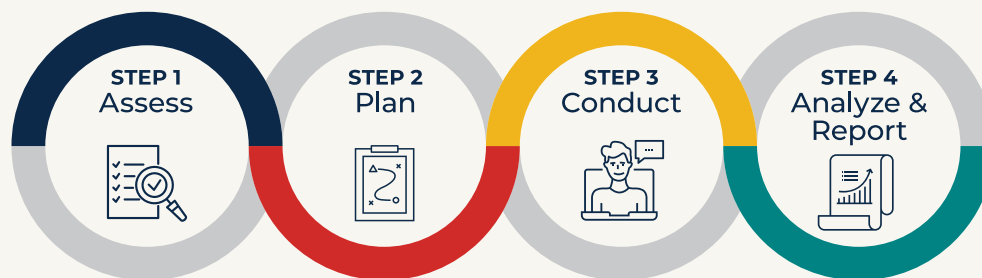




Guide to Equitably Co-Interpreting Data with Community Collaborators

This tool is part of Mathematica’s suite of measurement and evaluation (M&E) tools, which provides a road map for generating timely and actionable evidence about what works for whom, and in what context. The tools were designed to promote rapid innovation and scaling of promising solutions (such as programs, practices, or products). The Guide to Equitably Co-Interpreting Data with Community Collaborators is used in Step 4 of the M&E process.



Learn more about the M&E process and other tools here:

<https://www.mathematica.org/features/advancing-educational-equity>

Who should use this guide?

This guide was created for organizations planning to evaluate the implementation or effects of an intervention they implement. Intended users include program leads or research and evaluation staff within the implementing organization and external research partners.

What do we mean by “research collaborators” and “community collaborators”?

Research collaborators are people other than the lead researcher (or lead research organization) who contribute to any of the four steps of the measurement and evaluation (M&E) process. For example, research collaborators could include staff from program implementing organizations, research consultants or partners from subcontracted research firms, members of a research advisory board, or staff and leaders of organizations and places where the research will take place.

Community collaborators are a type of research collaborator—they are people from the communities served by the intervention (the program, product, or practice being studied) who contribute to any part of the M&E process. Community collaborators can contribute through various roles—volunteers, paid consultants, members of advisory boards, and others.

What is the Guide to Equitably Co-Interpreting Data with Community Collaborators?

This resource is intended to guide an organization's approach to data interpretation, with the goal of interpreting study data collaboratively with members of the community or communities where research is taking place. This collaborative interpretation, or co-interpretation, can make an evaluation more equitable by disrupting dynamics that otherwise prevent community members from exercising agency over research about their communities. Please note that, as we describe below, ideally collaboration with community members to co-interpret study data is just one aspect of an ongoing relationship with community members. In an equitable evaluation, collaborators should have opportunities to influence the study's learning objectives and methods, the data that get collected, and the ways in which findings are shared, in addition to co-interpreting study data. This guide is designed to be used with the **Engaging Communities as Research Collaborators** and the **Disseminating Results with a Community Focus** resources to help teams conduct research more equitably.

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Guide to Equitably Co-Interpreting Data with Community Collaborators

Guide to Equitably Co-Interpreting Data with Community Collaborators

What is co-interpretation of data, and how does it promote equity?

Engaging with community collaborators to interpret together the data gathered by a study can lead to more accurate and useful findings—and it can help disrupt inequitable power dynamics that are often present in research projects.¹ For most of their history, the social sciences regarded research participants, their activities, and their relationships with other people as “objects” of research,² a stance strongly related to the fact that early anthropologists were largely European and American researchers commissioned to report on the cultures of the peoples and territories their countries had colonized. However, in the mid-1970s, researchers began to recognize how social science research that worked this way rarely produced learning that had practical benefits for the people and groups being studied.^{3,4} In response, social scientists began to develop participatory⁵ research methods that sought to involve community collaborators more intentionally, which we draw on in our description of co-interpreting practices in this guide.

This guide focuses on how to equitably engage in collaborative data interpretation practices—or what we call *co-interpretation*—with community collaborators in ways that lead to deeper understanding of programs and inform their refinement to better achieve community members’ goals. By promoting a more equitable research process—that is, one that increases community collaborators’ power within the research project—co-interpretation is also designed to lead to more equitable outcomes. For example, by identifying the learning that is of highest priority to community collaborators (priorities that might differ from those of funders or program developers), this process can help focus future program improvements on areas that community collaborators prioritized.

Defining participatory methods and co-interpretation. Participatory research methods differ from conventional methods in how power, historically wielded by researchers alone, is shared with those being researched.⁶ Participatory methods in research require a strong awareness of systemic, institutional, and personal contexts as they relate to both researchers and those being researched. This engagement also requires building trust and relationships between members of the core research team and community collaborators as well as a commitment to openness in learning.⁷

The following table provides a brief definition of what co-interpretation of data is and is not.

Co-interpretation is...	Co-interpretation isn’t...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An inclusive process, acknowledging and applying the fact that people have different ways of knowing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presenting results for quick reactions or opinions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A means of being more transparent with community collaborators in how data from, and understandings of, their lives and communities will be represented to audiences outside of their contexts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A means of trying to confirm what your research has already concluded

An equitable orientation toward collaborators. Equitably co-interpreting data involves not only changing how teams prepare for and perform analysis, but also adopting specific stances toward collaborators. These include:⁸

1. **Regarding community collaborators as co-researchers with expertise.** Community collaborators should be considered subject experts whose expertise encompasses their personal knowledge, skills, lived experiences, and professional expertise.
2. **Focusing on solutions and improving outcomes.** The goal of participatory research is not simply to report on situations, but also to improve them (in ways that the community or communities define as improvement).
3. **Establishing and maintaining equal power relations.** Participatory methods empower community collaborators to make decisions that affect the research, which necessarily goes together with researchers relinquishing some control over the same decisions. In both planning and enacting collaborative M&E work, this stance can help uncover tensions between organizational and community collaborators' aims and envisioned outcomes of collaboration. We share some guidance on navigating these tensions in sections below on [defining and discussing research and researcher motivations](#); [determining time available and the scope of data to co-interpret](#); and [processes of engaging in meaning-making dialogue](#).

Ideally, this orientation means that community collaborators are involved in the research from the outset of the project (for example, by being given the responsibility to co-define research questions and contribute to decisions around ways of learning), with co-interpretation being one phase of a longer and iterative process of community collaborator engagement. The **Engaging Communities as Research Collaborators** tool provides additional practical examples of collaboration strategies to include community members as co-researchers and evaluation advisors in each step of the M&E process. If for any reason the research team finds itself in the scenario of engaging community collaborators in co-interpretation without having engaged them earlier in study planning, it is important to provide enough information about previously completed tasks so community collaborators are well-informed and grounded in the study context heading into co-interpretation. Specifically, to promote equitable engagement, researchers should provide community collaborators an account of the tasks completed before they joined the project and the rationale for those tasks. Researchers should also communicate clearly with community collaborators about the limitations of the data as they understand them.

Benefits of participatory research. Adopting the stances above while constructing the design and implementation of research with community collaborators yields results that are more just, valid, and useful for all involved. Communities feel greater ownership over research and data when they are produced by a participatory process, which also means that communities are more likely to use those data.⁹ Ultimately, research teams implementing participatory stances and methods actively disrupt a status quo that has often exploited those being studied.

Right or wrong, research can drive decision-making. If we do not address the power dynamic in the creation of research, at best, we are generating partial truths to inform decision-making in the social impact space. At worst, we are

generating inaccurate information that ultimately does more harm than good in our communities. This is why we care about how research is created.

— “*Why Am I Always Being Researched?*” *Chicago Beyond Equity Series*¹⁰

How to co-interpret data with community collaborators

Prepare internally for co-interpretation

- 1. Establish a shared understanding of co-interpretation.** Research teams can intentionally build consensus among their members about how to approach co-interpretation. Key areas for building consensus include:
 - How they will regard community collaborators (that is, as experts) and their perspectives (that is, carrying the same weight as opinions of other technical experts)
 - What they will focus on (co-identifying the meaning of patterns in the data and how this informs ways to improve outcomes for program participants)
 - How, to the greatest extent possible, they will establish and maintain equal power relations. This norming may also involve funders, clients, or other research collaborators with decision-making and performance evaluation authority to navigate any differences in understanding or prioritizing this work.¹¹
- 2. Define and discuss the motivations of the research (and researchers).** As conceptualized by the data science equity organization We All Count, research projects usually have both a specific core motivation as well as secondary goals driving the work of the research team. However, projects often leave the former vague and the latter unstated, and this lack of transparency often leads to research team members “defaulting” to prioritizing processes and results, thereby losing—or omitting altogether—any focus on equity.¹² Early on in preparing for co-interpretation, [as well as during the process of co-interpretation](#), research teams would benefit from articulating the following:
 - **The project’s core motivation—also called a mandate, public goal, or external goal.** The statement of motivation should include a specific, well-defined goal or goals, by defining (1) specific outcomes the project envisions without using vague verbs such as *improve* or *alleviate*; (2) a specific description of the population the program will be implemented with, avoiding vague adjectives such as *vulnerable*, *at-risk*, or *minority*; and (3) specific concepts the project will focus on, rather than using broad nouns such as *health* or *education* (for example, substituting with *mental health* or *trans reproductive health*, or *literacy education* or *middle school math education*)¹³
 - **The project’s secondary goals.** Research teams can identify these by considering the project’s *restrictions* (or challenges, considerations, or practical realities) and *rewards* (or goals, benefits, project results, or avoided consequences).¹⁴
 - *Restrictions* can span time, money, resources, expertise, laws and standards, and additional circumstances. Each of these can be, and often implicitly are, associated with a secondary goal. For example, if a project requires a report ready in six months, that time frame is a secondary (yet still powerful) motivation for research team members as they make specific research decisions and moves that may or may not affect fairness and equity in the project.¹⁵

- *Rewards* can be envisioned at the scale of the organization, research team, or individual team members. For example, at an organizational level, a project's success may support continued or increased chances of contract wins from the same or similar funders at the same time as research teams envision building internal reputations of strong client centrality. Simultaneously, individual team members may view the project as an opportunity to do good, earn a bonus, collect data for a positive appraisal, or build personal capacities, together forming a collection of secondary goals.¹⁶

Best
practice



Best practice: Consider the following sentence frames, from the *We All Count* project for equity in data science, to construct a “motivation touchstone” to share internally and externally:

“We are collecting data as part of our mandate: _____
(*external/primary motivation*) for _____ (*communities in
focus*) by _____ (*name of organization*). We aim to
accomplish this project in _____ (*amount of time*) with a
budget of _____ (*budget*). We will be working within the
bounds of current _____ (*restriction*) and
_____ (*restriction*). This project will benefit
_____ (*organization*) by _____ (*reward*), our
clients with _____ (*reward*), as well as our researchers with
_____ (*reward*) and _____ (*reward*).”¹⁷

3. **Clearly define individual researchers' roles.** In organizations with clear organizational structures, individual researcher roles are typically pre-decided, but research teams nonetheless benefit when task leads are explicit about inviting and signing on people to perform particular tasks (for example, drafting agendas, deciding facilitation techniques, taking notes, facilitating)—both in preparation work and during co-interpretation sessions.

Best
practice



Be flexible but recognize that everyone has limits; as well, be willing to collaborate by sharing authority, responsibility, and credit for success.¹⁸

4. **Identify and address any internal power imbalances.** Both long-established teams and teams with members who are new to each other benefit from transparent talk about internal power dynamics. People from sociocultural and socioeconomic backgrounds that have historically been marginalized in research spaces can find these power dynamics a barrier to fruitful participation. One way that colleagues with organizational seniority can address these power dynamics is to state their openness to the perspectives of newer colleagues and adopt measures to put that stance into action. It is important to note that power imbalances within an organization are difficult to address. They are often reinforced by organizational norms—for example, perfectionism, or regarding quantitative analysis as a more valid way of knowing than qualitative analysis. Research team leaders may need to

name and explicitly critique or disrupt these organizational norms to create an inclusive team environment that reduces internal power imbalances and establishes psychological safety.¹⁹ Resources directly addressing this aspect of inclusive leadership include McKinsey & Company's [*Psychological Safety and the Critical Role of Leadership Development*](#), the Management Center's [toolkit on management practices that center equity and inclusion](#), and Harvard Business Review's [breakdown of the components of inclusive leadership](#).

One notable way these unspoken power dynamics can play out occurs when colleagues from historically marginalized backgrounds share common identities or experiences with project communities in focus. In these scenarios, lead researchers should be transparent about their reasons for staffing these team members on the project. In the absence of such communication, lead researchers may inadvertently facilitate the interpretation of their colleagues' participation as tokenism. Lead researchers must also be careful not to set up unequal expectations of such colleagues' roles within the team (for example, an added burden of translation or interpretation on colleagues who happen to share languages with the project communities in focus).



Example strategies to address power imbalances on the research team

Task leads can choose to seek team members' perspectives—whether on decisions about the co-interpretation process, on the very data to be co-interpreted, or otherwise—through an online form, online whiteboard, or online project management space that enables users to submit responses anonymously.

Where digital tools are not available, task leads can choose to seek team inputs through anonymous responses on paper, as well as make concerted efforts to individually call on all members of the team to share their voices to the greatest extent feasible. They can also seek information from team members in advance about what engagement methods best suit them. Note that such means of mitigating internal power imbalances may be more frequently called for earlier rather than later in a team's time together. Enacting them often enough at the outset of projects quickly sets the tone that the voices of all people will be equally valued.

- 5. Compensate community collaborators for their time.** Financially compensating community collaborators for their participation in co-interpretation is a concrete way of valuing their time and respecting the expertise they bring to co-interpretation. Account for provisions that would best enable them to participate fully, such as timings convenient for their schedules, meeting locations (including virtual options), meals, and child care. When research projects engage community collaborators deeply in each stage of planning and conducting the research, this compensation may be part of a larger contract or grant that funds a sustained partnership between the research team and community collaborators.

Prepare with community collaborators for co-interpretation

- 1. Assemble the co-interpretation work group.** Research teams must ensure that their work group is composed of multiple people from their project's community (or communities) in focus. Recognizing that a diversity of expertise exists among projects' communities in focus, ensuring the presence of more than one person from each community will facilitate a richer and more inclusive co-interpretation session. Because a diversity of backgrounds and perspectives often exists within communities as well, another consideration that enriches the work of co-interpretation is to include people whose backgrounds reflect the fullest range of the community's (or communities') ages, genders and sexual orientations, religions, races, ethnicities, cultures, languages, and disabilities, as applicable. In this regard, empowering community collaborators to independently recruit people from their networks as additional community collaborators can be especially helpful.²⁰
- 2. Determine time available and scope of data to co-interpret.** Equitably co-interpreting data with community collaborators necessitates allocating enough time for them to become familiar with the study, be trained in data interpretation, interpret data, and discuss their interpretations.²¹ Project timeline restrictions might not allow for enough time to fully orient and train community collaborators to co-interpret results from every data source. In these cases, the research team should not skimp on time to orient and train community collaborators but should instead prioritize which information to co-interpret. Ideally, community collaborators should have the determinative say in which data the broader group examines. If community collaborators do not choose data that researchers in the group strongly believe they should examine together, researchers should [discuss the context and motivation of that belief](#) and seek community collaborators' understanding. Whenever possible, researchers must try to supplement community collaborators' choices of to-be-examined data with theirs, not replace them, seeking an extension of existing meeting time or the setup of another meeting time if necessary. Note: When reporting study findings, the team should be transparent about which results were co-interpreted and which were not.

Best
practice



Establish a clear and manageable scope for engaging community collaborators by setting realistic boundaries with them on what they have the capacity to respond to.²²

- 3. Prepare data or preliminary data analyses for co-interpretation in accessible ways.** Because community collaborators come from a variety of professional, educational, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, it is important for data to be prepared for the work group in ways that allow for maximum engagement. To create useful, accessible displays of data for co-interpretation, when assembling the work group, research teams should gather information about what types of data presentation and reference materials are useful for community collaborators. Data displays and co-interpretation meeting materials should have the following characteristics:
 - **Easy to understand.** The extent to which people are familiar with research terminology, concepts, and representations (such as charts or graphs) can vary widely, so confirm community collaborators' preferences early.

- **Available in community collaborators' preferred language(s).** Determine whether translation—of data or the co-interpretation process—to languages other than the most shared one among the work group is necessary.
- **Accessible to community collaborators with disabilities.** Confirm whether any steps are needed to ensure accessibility. These might include closed captioning, alt-text, large print, translation to sign languages, and compatibility of documents and programs with assistive technology.²³



Use visualizations of data such as bar graphs and pie charts to help people without technical training participate in data analysis and interpretation.²⁴

Be careful not to oversimplify the data that will be shared with community collaborators, as doing so can mask complex relationships.²⁵

- 4. Share the meeting agenda, data, or preliminary data analyses with community collaborators in advance.**²⁶ It may be helpful for community collaborators to receive data or preliminary data analyses in advance of meeting with the work group—chances are they have not familiarized themselves with the data as long as the project's researchers. Sharing data or preliminary analyses in advance also ensures the research team is accommodating community collaborators with specific linguistic or accessibility needs proactively rather than reactively. When sharing meeting agendas with community collaborators, communicate that they can propose changes, and then implement suggestions as feasible. When unable to implement a proposed change, explain why, and, if appropriate, plan another meeting with the new agenda items.
- 5. Make a plan to mitigate real or perceived power imbalances with community collaborators.** It is important for research team members to be aware of and understand how aspects of their identities and social position—or, **positionality**—could affect community collaborators' engagement and contribution to the co-interpretation process, and act with empathy. Consider and share your answers to the key questions included in [this resource on writing a reflexivity statement](#) as one means of acknowledging and navigating real or perceived power imbalances.



Some imbalanced power dynamics are easier to recognize than others

For example, it is straightforward to imagine the pressure and anxiety community collaborators who also are grantees of a philanthropic foundation might feel when invited to data analysis sessions initiated by M&E researchers contracted by their funder. Other imbalanced power dynamics are more subtle, such as reticence among community collaborators arising out of their belonging to sociocultural groups with histories of harm from discrimination and misrepresentation in research. Equitable co-interpretation is achievable only when researchers are prepared with what they will say to acknowledge and address differences in lived experience or privilege with their community collaborators. This includes communicating how they will commit to mitigating real or perceived imbalances in power between them.

Engage in meaning-making dialogue



Setting up



Introduce everyone and build norms together

Begin the meeting with introductions that include the person's name, their pronouns (if comfortable), their role in the research project thus far, and their role in the current meeting. Consider icebreakers and reflective questions (for example, "What do you hope to learn today?") to build rapport. After the icebreakers, set up some group norms to help guide the co-interpretation process. You may choose to co-establish such norms as:

- Respect for each other's perspectives
- An expectation that not all questions or issues raised need to be resolved during the session
- Leading with curiosity (so people question their assumptions)
- Reflecting on one's biases, power, and space in the room
- Being engaged and listening actively
- Or whatever else may be important to the group

Note that norms can be generated organically (which takes more time), or you can present a few and ask community collaborators to suggest changes and add more.

Explain the goal of the session and the co-interpretation process

Explain what you hope to achieve from the meeting and why. This is also an opportunity for you to communicate to your community collaborators how you view them (that is, as experts) and the input you are asking them to provide to the process. Specifically, it is important to convey that you weigh their perspective and expertise as much as other members of the team whose expertise might be in a different area, such as data analysis.



Example of explaining the session goal and co-interpretation process

“We hope to share some data points from the evaluation and discuss what these data points may mean given your role, knowledge, and experience with the program or initiative. Together, we want to develop a mutual understanding of the information that has been collected for this evaluation.”

Seek and incorporate community collaborators’ understandings of the co-interpretation process

This is a time for you to explicitly empower community collaborators to share their opinions of the process to follow and to incorporate changes in the process as appropriate. You can also invite individual community collaborators to express how they view themselves in relation to your team, other community collaborators, and the data.

Acknowledge any disparities in power that exist or may be perceived by community collaborators

Make sure to plainly acknowledge any imbalances of power that exist, or may be perceived to exist, between your community collaborators and you. You can also explain the ways in which you have planned to lessen the possibility of real or perceived power imbalances interfering with their comfort expressing their views (for example, through making responses anonymous), calling special attention to the planned time for reflection in the co-interpretation process.



Example of acknowledging disparities in power

“We want to acknowledge that we are coming into this space with lenses that we gained during our time at graduate school [or other formal education spaces]. We also want to acknowledge that we know that these lenses have a history of having been developed and validated in research that rarely took into consideration the perspectives and knowledge of the people who were researched, who often were people of color and people experiencing poverty. We would like to assure you that we will be valuing your interpretation of the data no differently than we would our own interpretations. We would also like to encourage you to push back on our interpretations if they appear to you as being off-base or if they differ from yours.”

Review the framework of the meeting

Provide your community collaborators with a high-level overview of what you will be discussing and be sure to present and explain the research questions that pertain to the data that will be shared. This includes explaining the overall learning goals, the process by which the research questions were developed, and who was involved. Also offer community collaborators the opportunity to ask questions.

Reviewing the data



Explain the contexts and limitations of the data

Ensure that co-researchers have a sense of the contexts in which the data were gathered as well as any associated limitations.²⁷



Examples of contexts and limitations of data

- How were participants identified and recruited? What participant exclusion criteria existed and were applied during recruitment, and why had they been established?
- How were the data collected—administrative records, assessments, surveys, interviews? What data sources were excluded, and why?
- What benefits were participants expected to receive, if any? What real or perceived risks did participants face from participation? (For example, for students, this could include feeling that teachers would hold negative perceptions of them.)
- What are the racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and linguistic backgrounds of the participants of the project, and how did the research team factor them into data collection?

Present data in comprehensible units

To facilitate better comprehension, it is a good communication practice to present one data item at a time to your community collaborators. However, this can be impractical at times, and it may sometimes be more useful to present a set of interrelated data items in one go. Keep responsiveness to community collaborators' capacities in mind, making real-time adjustments to the amount of data you share, as necessary.

**Best
practice**



Use an editable note-taking tool for participants to write down their responses to the initial questions. Then, as a group, review the notes that are posted.²⁸

Engaging in individual interpretation and group discussion



Restate research questions and engage in meaning-making with community collaborators

For each research question, plan to move through a co-interpretation cycle:

- 1. Restate the research question of focus and introduce the data display or preliminary analysis results (1–2 minutes).**
- 2. Allow community collaborators to think individually about the meaning of the data, using questions like the ones below as prompts for reflection (5 minutes).²⁹** Advise researchers and community collaborators alike that it is good practice to begin by making basic observations about what the data say first, before gradually building toward more interpretive statements. This sequence enables the research team to be especially cautious against too quickly drawing inferences before engaging in a full discussion of the group's understanding of the data.^{30, 31}



Examples of guiding questions for data review (ordered from less interpretive to more)

- What piece of data stands out to you?
- What questions does this information raise for you?
- How would you summarize these data?
- What could you say about ... ?
- How do you think ... may be related to ... ?
- What conclusions could you draw from ... ?
- How would you assess the importance of ... ?
- What ideas did you have that were confirmed by the data? Disconfirmed?
- What was missing in the data that you thought you would see?

Sources: Mathematica (in press)³², Learning for Action (2014)³³, Powell (2022)³⁴

- 3. Encourage each person in the meeting to share their thoughts and any clarifying questions with the group (3–4 minutes per person).** (Refer to [Example strategies to address power imbalances on the research team](#) as background for this step.)
- 4. Hold time for community collaborators to respond to one another's thoughts and questions (10–15 minutes).**

5. Share the research team's initial interpretations, discuss points of overlap and difference with community collaborators' interpretations, and invite reactions from community collaborators (5–10 minutes).
6. Facilitate discussion to identify any additional insights from community collaborators and to summarize interpretations (10 minutes, but more time may be needed).



Examples of guiding questions for group discussion

- How does this information answer the research question? Where does it fall short?
- Are there other takeaways from this information, apart from the research question we were trying to answer?
- How did each program component support participant change?
- What characteristics and circumstances might affect participants' benefits from the program?
- What conclusion statement might summarize these responses?

Best
practice



When sharing the research team's interpretations in [Step 5](#), take care to frame them as being alongside and in conversation with community collaborators' thoughts, not in competition with them. In the sample plan above, a single cycle of co-interpretation is estimated to require about 45 minutes if there are three community collaborators. In practice, the time required could vary widely based on the number of community collaborators and level of detail of the data to be interpreted.

Discuss experiences that inform researchers' and community collaborators' interpretations

It is important for researchers and community collaborators to be explicit about the contexts and backgrounds out of which their interpretations arise. However, speaking and thinking openly about them can be difficult, as people's personal and professional contexts and backgrounds can often become "invisible" to them over time. Regardless, communicating about knowledge claims, making especially clear the assumptions involved in people's perspectives, is an important aspect of engaging in meaning-making dialogue. Parties cannot equitably achieve a deeper mutual understanding of the data if either party does not also understand why the other is viewing the data the way they do. Researchers can model this practice in Step 5 above by being explicit about assumptions they use to help make sense of the data.

Closing out



Seek and share a summary of interpretations of the data

This step assures both researchers and community collaborators that their contributions have been heard, recorded, and understood as they wished them to be. If any misunderstandings of interpretations are revealed at this stage, it is worth taking the time to re-articulate them to their contributor's approval. It is good practice to hold at least 15 to 20 minutes for this exercise to ensure that this important step receives enough attention.



Examples of closing-out guiding questions

- What other meanings do you see in the data that we haven't already discussed?
- What other comments do you have about the data?
- Based on these draft conclusions, what changes might strengthen the program design?
- What changes might improve implementation?
- Does this lead to any new questions?
- Where might we need more information or analysis to draw a conclusion?

Sources: Mathematica, (in press)³⁵, Learning for Action, (2014)³⁶, Powell, (2022)³⁷

Share notes and next steps

To promote transparency and communicate mutual respect, commit to sharing your session notes (or recording transcripts, if applicable) with your community collaborators, and request the same from them. Communicate timelines around promptly compensating them for their time. Discuss with community collaborators how the interpretations arrived at during the session will be used, and make plans, as appropriate, to remain in communication with one another. Indicate in which additional opportunities you are planning to involve community collaborators regarding further analysis, writing, reviewing, and disseminating products with the research findings.

Reflect and act



Researchers benefit from engaging in reflection before undertaking any actions following the co-interpretation session. Task leads can use insights from reflective team debriefs to plan what must follow for the project. One important aspect of this reflection is to discuss how the team wants to continue engaging with community collaborators in the future, for example, by requesting review and input on dissemination products from the research. Besides project-specific topics, debriefing with your team could also include a discussion of the following:

- What went well and what could have been done better

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- Lessons for future community engagement (with the present group or any other)
- Any lingering questions

Endnotes

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- ¹⁸ Holkup, P. A., Tripp-Reimer, T., Salois, E. M., & Weinert, C. (2004). Community-based participatory research: An approach to intervention research with a Native American community. *ANS: Advances in Nursing Science*, 27(3), 162–175. <https://doi.org/10.1097%2F00012272-200407000-00002>
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- ²⁰ Holkup et al. (2004).
- ²¹ Consider including in training sessions time for the research team to inform community collaborators about research and data analysis, as well as time for community collaborators to inform research team members about aspects of the community context and history they feel are relevant for the project.
- ²² Holkup et al. (2004).
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- ²⁷ Mathematica (in press).
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- ²⁹ Because it might be difficult to estimate the time required for all co-researchers to arrive at an interpretation of the data, be prepared to update this timing based on what you observe during the initial round of co-interpretation.
- ³⁰ Argyris, C. (1990). Overcoming organizational defenses: Facilitating organizational learning (1st Edition). Pearson.
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